Emmett & White
ANTIQUES & INTERIORS

Set of Eight Circa 1700 Trade Costume Drawings, Circle of Nicolas de L'Armessin II

£6,450

Emmett & White Ltd
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REF: 6881

Height: 49 cm (19.3")

Width: 39 cm (15.4")

Description

A fabulous and highly unusual set of eight original pen-and-ink drawings from the celebrated *Costumes des Métiers*-or "Costumes of the Trades"-tradition, attributed to the circle of Nicolas de L'Armessin II and dating to circa 1700.

Each drawing presents a figure whose fantastical costume is ingeniously assembled from the tools, materials, and products of a particular occupation. Garments become instruments of labour; hats, sleeves, and accessories are transformed into the visual language of the trade. The result is a wonderfully imaginative fusion of portraiture, satire, costume design, and social observation.

The series belongs to the famous French *Costumes grotesques* tradition associated with the L'Armessin family of Parisian printmakers. These extraordinary compositions drew on the playful visual legacy of Arcimboldo, creating allegorical figures in which an individual's identity is expressed entirely through the implements of his or her profession. They offer a vivid and humorous record of the trades, street life, and theatrical imagination of late 17th- and early 18th-century France.

Executed with lively pen work and considerable graphic flair, this group of eight drawings has exceptional decorative appeal, whether displayed individually or as a unified series. Their inventive imagery rewards close viewing, revealing a succession of tools, wares, and occupational references integrated into each extraordinary costume.

A rare and evocative group for collectors of Old Master drawings, early French graphic art, costume history, and the curious, imaginative world of *cabinet de curiosités* collecting. The set would make a remarkable focal point in a library, study, or gallery interior.

Attributed to the circle of Nicolas de L'Armessin II; pen and ink on paper; France, circa 1700. Please refer to the photographs for individual subjects, dimensions, condition, and any inscriptions or annotations.

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